

NCCU Committee on Hungarian Refugee Students

Meeting: University of Montreal, February 23rd, 1957 at 10.30 a.m.

Present: Rev. Maurice Beauchamp, O.M.I., Chairman, Dr. Frank Stilling, Secretary Treasurer of N.C.C.U., Messrs. Evans, Knowles, Blanchard of the Committee, Messrs. McFaul, Cross, Lefaivre, Bernolak, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Mr. Perinbam, WUSC, Mrs. Smith and Mr. Décarie, associate directors of the Committee. Dr. McLeish of the Committee and Mr. Pickett of NFCUS were unable to attend.

The Chairman opens the meeting with suggestions regarding a proposed agenda. As a first item, the appointment of a secretary is considered. Mr. Evans proposes that Dr. Blanchard be appointed secretary and his motion is seconded by Dr. Knowles. Carried unanimously.

Concerning the terms of reference of the Committee, the Chairman reads a letter addressed to him by the Honourable J.W. Pickersgill, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. In this letter, the Minister expresses his appreciation for the work being carried by N.C.C.U. and proposes his conception of the terms of reference of the N.C.C.U. Committee. According to him, the main function of the Committee is to assess the academic qualities of the Hungarian Refugee students and to direct these students to all universities in Canada. The Committee should also be concerned with the coordination to be carried with various sources of welfare and help for the students.

Mrs. Smith remarks that one of the most important part of that coordination work will be with universities registrars. Dr. Stilling states that this Committee was appointed by the Executive Committee of the N.C.C.U. with an academic function and not a social function. Accordingly, emphasis should be laid upon the academic assessment of students.

It is understood that the first task will be to determine who is a student and who is not a student, among those Hungarian Refugees. Mr. Evans remarks that the assessment of these students should be ultimately done by the universities themselves. He emphasizes the role of this Committee, as being one of coordination of all institutions and agencies relatively to the eventual admission of these students in the various universities. He also stresses the necessity of clearing the status of those Hungarian Refugees. Mr. Perinbam expresses the view that this task of coordination entails a voluntary and not arbitrary association of institutions and agencies.

The Chairman summarizes his conception of what are the terms of reference of this Committee. He claims that it is indeed the business of the Committee to ascertain whether the Hungarian Refugees are bona fide students. According to him, the N.C.C.U. Committee is part of a largest scheme involving universities and other institutions with respect to the academic status of these refugees and the coordination work involved in dispersing these students among all universities in Canada. The N.C.C.U. Committee should have to deal a) with all the Hungarian Refugees who came at the invitation of some universities; b) with all those who came individually within the general refugee scheme; c) and finally all those who came in flights chartered by the Immigration Department. He proposes that the N.C.C.U. Committee be, above all, responsible for the academic implications and the Department of Immigration be responsible for the general maintenance of the students, before they are accepted by the

universities.

Dr. Stilling reads a letter sent to him by President MacKenzie of the University of British Columbia, relatively to the students in forestry who have been accepted as a group with their professors by the University of British Columbia. From this letter, it seems that Dr. MacKenzie would like to have some outside help. Dr. Stilling, further remarks that the Executive Committee of N.C.C.U. will set terms of reference according to the suggestions made in Mr. Pickersgill's letter, and of course according to the recommendations of this Committee.

The Chairman, then, asks to the representatives of the Department of Immigration how many students are supposed to come and also if the Department or any Canadian official has made any promise to the students in Vienna. Mr. Cross says that the number is approximately 355 and further adds that no official promise was made to any student.

Dr. Knowles submits this resolution to the Committee:

" Whereas the present terms of reference of the N.C.C.U. Committee on Hungarian students do not authorize the Committee to assume responsibility for finding accommodations for students during the present months, nor to raise monies of any kind, the Committee nevertheless welcomes the possibility of suitable accommodation being found and will cooperate with such ventures so far as its terms of reference permit.

Similarly, the Committee though recognizing that present university offers of assistance for the academic year 1957-58 fall far short of what will be needed for the refugee students and that the Committee itself cannot make good the deficiency, nonetheless, if additional assistance should be forthcoming, the special Committee supports the principle of having the N.C.C.U. accept the trusteeship of such monies if so requested."

Mr. Evans proposes an amendment to the second paragraph of the resolution in order to replace "the special Committee supports the principle of having the N.C.C.U. accept the trusteeship of such monies if so requested" by "the special Committee would be prepared to work in close cooperation with the agency having trusteeship of the fund". This amendment is seconded by Dr. Knowles and is carried unanimously.

After further discussion of the resolution, another amendment is proposed by Mr. Evans in order to have the two paragraphs arranged in such a manner that it will be unequivocally one resolution. He moves that after "terms of reference permit. . . ", be added "and", and the word "similarly" be replaced by the word "whereas". At the same time, Mr. Evans moves that in the first paragraph of the suggested resolution, the member of sentence reading: "nor to raise monies of any kind. . . " be struck off. The resolution being thus changed, the amendment is formally moved by Mr. Evans and seconded by Dr. Knowles and carried unanimously.

Accordingly, the resolution adopted with the two amendments reads as follows:

" Whereas the present terms of reference of the N.C.C.U. Committee on

Hungarian students do not authorize the Committee to assume responsibility for finding accommodations for students during the present months, the Committee nevertheless welcomes the possibility of suitable accommodation being found and will cooperate with such ventures so far as its terms of reference permit, and whereas, the Committee though recognizing that present university offers of assistance for the academic year 1957-58 fall far short of what will be needed for the refugee students and that the Committee itself cannot make good the deficiency, nonetheless, if additional assistance should be forthcoming, the special Committee would be prepared to work in close cooperation with the agency having trusteeship of the fund".

Mr. Cross declares that the \$3.00 per diem will no longer be given to each student after the month of May.

Mr. Evans remarks that no public fund should be involved in providing scholarships for the Hungarian students. In that perspective, Dr. Knowles suggests that a general scheme be created for assisting in the maintenance of the students, in such a way that no discrimination should exist as far as Canadian students are concerned. Dr. Knowles points out the necessity of having a public appeal made to raise funds. He asks the question: "Who would conduct a public appeal and how should the publicity go about it?"

Mr. Evans is in favor of parity of treatment on a National basis relatively to all refugee students. He also adds that public money should not be given for assistance relative to tuition fees, if the universities themselves cannot raise fees.

The Chairman asserts that there are places available to receive all the Hungarian students. The problem is to have enough bursaries for assistance. Dr. Blanchard asks the question: "Who is responsible for the maintenance of the Hungarian refugees until they are accepted or taken in charge by university communities?" The Department representatives answer that it is their responsibility.

Mr. Perinbam would like to know to what extent the concentrated language classes give the Hungarian refugees preparation in view of being admitted in the Canadian universities. He also brings about the fact that the situation is actually acute for WUSC to whom many offers have been entrusted. He would like to know what are the responsibilities of the Committee in view of that situation.

Coming back to the terms of reference, the Chairman gives some details regarding the administrative routine to be followed in the office and the integration of procedure. He emphasizes the fact that the office has to coordinate. Mr. Evans goes on saying that the first job of the directors is a) to establish a documentation relative to the students; b) to constitute a central record office and c) to establish liaison between students and agencies, mainly the Department, the universities and WUSC. Mr. Perinbam would be in favor of using immediately the offers in order to know what will be the saturation point. Mr. Evans proposes a concrete step and moves that this resolution be accepted:

" That WUSC immediately in closest cooperation with the coordinating office in Montreal be encouraged to make immediate disposition of the offers of scholarships and bursaries made to that body".

This resolution moved by Mr. Evans is seconded by Dr. Stilling. It is carried.

Mr. Perinbam then says that the representatives of WUSC would come to Montreal to discuss the awards with some members of the Committee. It is proposed that Dr. Matthews and Dr. Blanchard should sit with the representatives of WUSC. It might be also a good idea if Dr. Bernolak of the Department should also be present.

Relatively to the expenses involved by the representatives of WUSC, it is moved by Dr. Stilling that the Committee should pay same. This motion of Dr. Stilling is seconded by Mr. Evans and unanimously carried.

To complement this last resolution, Mr. Evans proposes this resolution:

" That the Committee instruct its directors to work in closest cooperation with WUSC to make disposition of the offers made to the N.C.C.U. Committee and to WUSC".

This resolution moved by Mr. Evans is seconded by Dr. Stilling. All are in favor except Dr. Knowles.

Mrs. Smith raises the question of the status of Mr. Pogany and seems to imply that there is some problems with the stenographers in the office. Mr. Evans proposes this resolution:

" That question hiring Mr. Pogany and question of stenographer be referred to sub-committee composed of the Chairman, Dr. Blanchard and Dr. Knowles with power to act".

This resolution is carried unanimously.

Finally, Dr. Knowles moves that the meeting be adjourned.